THE Protestants Letter CONCERNING THE RE-UNION OF THE Two Religions TO THE ASSEMBLY OF THE Clergy of France,

Held at *PARIS*, *May*, 1685.

Humbly offered to the Consideration of all Protestants in *England*, as an Expedient for reconciling the great Differences in Religion now among them.

LONDON,
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Licenſed,

Octob. 2. 1689. *JAMES FRASER.*

TO THE

WORSHIPFUL,

AND HIS

Honoured Friend,

JOHN JONES Esq;

SIR,

THE Uniting of Christians is so very desirable a thing, that the bringing it to pass will deserve the utmost of our Care and Pains; whoever offers any thing that tends this way, deserves to be heard. The Mischiefs of causeless Separation from one another, are not easily to be reckon'd up: On the other hand, the Advantages of Uniting upon tolerable Terms are exceeding great. Upon these Considerations I think the following Papers well worthy to

be made publick; and no Man (I hope) will think it unſeaſonable to publiſh them at this time, when there are on foot honeſt Deſigns and Endeavours of procuring a laſting Unity among our ſelves. This Opportunity which we have of effecting it, I hope, will not be loſt; and I ſhall much rejoice, if theſe following Papers will any way contribute to ſo bleſſed an End: Upon that Score it is, that I cannot but commend them to the Conſideration of all that wiſh well to our common Chriſtianity; and, conſidering the Authors, and Occaſion of this following Letter, I cannot think it will be unacceptable to any that are Proteſtants.

I need not tell you why I prefix your Name: 'Tis but juſt that it ſhould return to him, from whom the Copy, and the Opportunity of Printing it came. I truſt, you will have no Cauſe to repent that you conſented to this Publication: It is high time, in our ſeveral Places, to do all we can to the putting

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an End, as much as may be, to our unhappy Differences.

God of his Mercy inſpire us all with the Spirit of Peace and Charity, of Meekneſs and Modeſty, and mutual Forbearance; and grant that we may mind the Things that make for Peace, and for the Edifying of one another.

I am, in great Sincerity,

SIR,

October 21. 1689.

Your moſt Affectionate

Friend and Servant,

Richard Kidder.

Sirs,

Sirs,

THere is a Report runs abroad in the World, that in your approaching Aſſembly, under the auſpicious Influences of His Moſt Chriſtian Majeſty, you are to uſe your Endeavours, about that which that great King doth call his great Work; which is, the Re-union of his Subjects into one and the ſame Religion.

The King hath very great reaſon to call this his great Work, becauſe that if he bring it about, it will be the greateſt Work that hath been effected theſe many Ages, and the moſt glorious Work too, and I may add to that, the moſt pious Work alſo, provided that it be done upon Principles conformable to Reaſon, Religion, and Piety. You have perhaps thought, Sirs, that the Proteſtants of *France* were very far from the point, to which they are deſigned to be brought: When they have been talk'd to of a Re-union, the greateſt part of them have look'd upon it as a thing impoſſible, and they have not ſeem'd ſo much as to deſire it; and probably, it is that Diſpoſition of Spirit, wherein they were thought to be, which hath induced you to ſo harſh a Courſe againſt them. You were of opinion, that after you had mortified them, by the loſs of their Temples, of their Liberties and Privileges, of their very Children, and, in many places, of their Eſtates, they would be the more eaſily brought to your Bent: But, Sirs, I dare aſſure you, that all this was needleſs, and that they who have ſeem'd not to deſire the Re-union, did lie under that Indiſpoſition only upon account of the apparent Impoſſibility which they ſaw in that Deſign; for otherwiſe, there is not one of us that hath not, and doth not, with a very ardent Paſſion, deſire to ſee an end of a Schiſm ſo ſcandalous, and which doth put ſo great an obſtacle to the accompliſhment of thoſe Prophecies which do promiſe unto us the Re-calling of the *Jews*, and the Bringing in of all the People of the World unto the Chriſtian Faith.

That, Sirs, which made us to believe this Re-union impoſſible, was, becauſe we could not perſuade our ſelves, that we were ſincerely invited thereunto; but that Deceit did lie at the bottom of this fair Pretence, and that it was nothing but a Snare laid to entrap us; for otherwiſe we believe, that there is nothing more eaſie,

than to bring ſuch an Enterpriſe to good ſucceſs, provided, Sirs, that you would cloath your ſelves with that Spirit of Equity, Reaſon, Wiſdom, and Juſtice, which ought to be inſeparable from Perſons of your Character, called to the Conduct and Government of the Church.

We would very willingly, Sirs, be perſuaded of your good Intentions, and do gladly acknowledge, that the *Gallican* Church is the pureſt part of all the *Roman* Churches that are at this day in the whole World: The reſt of the Churches which do ſtill depend upon the See of *Rome*, do pertinaciouſly continue in their ancient diſſoluteneſs, and in thoſe Diſorders wherewith they were reproached at the beginning of the laſt Age; but the *Gallican* Church is at this day compoſed of learned, underſtanding, wiſe and moderate Biſhops, and ſuch who (for the moſt part) have a great care of the Government of their Dioceſſes. This doth incline us to believe, that it is not the Spirit of Perſecution which doth excite you, but that (in truth) you do ſeriouſly deſire the Peace of the Church, and the Ceſſation of that grand Schiſm which hath divided the Weſt, for above theſe hundred and fifty Years.

You do well believe, that if the *Gallican* Church had but once re-united her Children into one and the ſame Society of Chriſtians, her Example would be of great force and weight with all the reſt of *Europe*; and that all the Weſtern Chriſtians would be found to return, in a ſhort time, to a Spirit of Peace and Concord: And we are of the ſame Belief, together with you. For which Cauſe, we do offer up our Vows, with moſt ſincere and ardent Prayers, that it will pleaſe God to inſpire you with reaſonable Thoughts, and put into your Hearts juſt Ways and Means for the enterpriſing and accompliſhing of this great Work.

It is an Affair which is common to us, as well as you; for we are one of thoſe Parties that are to be re-united: It is therefore but reaſonable that we ſhould ſpeak, and that we ſhould be heard in this matter; and by conſequence, it would be but juſt, that we ſhould be permitted to aſſemble, and to conſer together. Perhaps the Spirit of God would ſuggeſt unto us ſuch Thoughts and Means as would not be diſpleaſing unto you: But, in humble Expectation, until his good Providence ſhall bring that Work unto its maturity, and waiting until our whole Body can make their Remonſtrances unto you, permit ſome particular Perſons of that Body, Sirs, to acquaint you with their Thoughts. Their deſign is purpoſely to make you comprehend, that this Work of Re-union is not ſo difficult as

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you (perhaps) may have perſuaded your ſelves that it was: You may proceed therein by ſuch ways as will aſſuredly bring it unto good ſucceſs, without wounding your Conſciences in the leaſt meaſure, and without offering any violence unto ours. For the proof of which, we will lay down ſuch Principles, wherein, Sirs, we are perſuaded that you will conſent with us, for they are unconteſtable.

1. In the firſt place, We ſuppoſe that you have real Intentions for a true Re-union (to take that Term in its moſt exact and ſtrict ſignification.) All Treaties which are made in War, between two Parties) are properly of Re-unions. In none of all thoſe Treaties whatſoever, doth any one of the Parties carry away all that it doth demand; for otherwiſe, it would not be to treat, but to receive the Law of the Conqueror; that is, to ſubmit unto the Yoke of Oppreſſion, as being the weakeſt and vanquiſhed Party. But in every true Union, there muſt be a yielding on both ſides; both do make high Demands, but each of them is contented to take much leſs: It is therefore neceſſary, Sirs, that you ſhould explain your ſelves upon that Particular; and we do believe you to be too reaſonable, not to expect a ſatisfactory Anſwer from you. You will undoubtedly tell us, that you do ſpeak in good Faith, and mean ſincerely, when you ſpeak of a Re-union; and that you conceive there may be a Relaxation made in ſome leſs important Articles, for Peace ſake, and to bring back again, into the Boſom of the Church, ſo many Perſons which (as you believe) are departed from it. For otherwiſe, if by the term of Re-union there be nothing meant, but (ſimply) a Return unto the *Roman* Church, though ſhe do never reform her ſelf, nor concede any thing demanded of her, it is clear that that is but a mere Abuſe of the Terms, and can never be called a Re-union, it is nothing but a pure and ſimple Abjuration of that which you call Schiſm and Hereſie. It is not to be believed, Sirs, that this is that which you intend; for you are more wiſe than to attempt ſuch a Work, and not to ſee that it is abſolutely impoſſible. It is not (I confeſs) impoſſible for a King, ſo puiſſant as ours is, to extirpate out of his Eſtates that which they call *Calviniſm*: He hath already razed our Temples, ſcattered our Flocks, chaſed away the moſt part of our Miniſters: That Temptation hath already prevailed over a great number of People, unto whom you do the honour to give the name of Converts. If, by your Advice, His Majeſty do continue this harſh Courſe to his faithful Subjects, who deſire nothing ſo much as the Glory of their Sovereign; if the King do force the Reformed, by taking away of their Children,

by rigorous Edicts, by Sentences of Death and Baniſhment, to change their Religion, the weakeſt of them may (perhaps) return into the Communion of *Rome*, which, yet notwithſtanding, they cannot but deteſt with all their Hearts; and ſo you will make a Company of Hypocrites, and profane Converts of them. The greateſt part of thoſe that are truly pious, will find a Retreat; and whatever care can be taken to ſhut the Gates of the Kingdom againſt them, yet they will make an Eſcape through the Windows. After this manner it is, that *Calviniſm* will be extinguiſhed in *France*: But this, Sirs, can never be accounted a Re-union, this is not, in all probability, that which you have in your aim to do; for this would be to bring the Kingdom to Deſolation, to raviſh from the King his Subjects, to add unto the Church falſe Chriſtians, and unto Jeſus Chriſt falſe Members.

Beſides all this, Sirs, it is not to be believed, that Men, of ſuch great Knowledge and Wiſdom as you are, can chuſe but conceive, That it would be very edifying, to ſacrifice ſomething for the Salvation of ſo many Thouſands of Souls, which live in a State of Separation, and which you (by your Principles) are obliged to look upon as Souls which do deſtroy themſelves. It is not likely, that you ſhould be of the cruel number of Thoſe, who ſay, That the Church would not put out a Wax-Candle in Favour of the *Hugonots*: For (in ſhort) Reaſon, Piety, and Religion, do require a Tolleration of the Weak.

The Apoſtle St. *Paul* was throughly perſuaded, that the Uſe of the Legal Ceremonies was Uſeleſs and Unprofitable; nay, that it was dangerous unto Chriſtianity. He goes ſo far, as to ſay, That they who do obſerve the Law, do diſ-annul the Goſpel; and yet nevertheleſs, he doth conſtantly preach up mutual Forbearance. He requires, That the Weak ſhould be borne with; That he that eats of all Things indifferently, ſhould not deſpiſe him that makes a Scruple of eating diverſe Things; That Chriſtians ſhould proceed and keep Pace with each other in thoſe Things wherein they do agree, until God ſhall reveal unto them thoſe Things wherein they differ.

The Evidence of Reaſon is ſo ſtrong and ſo clear for this, that it is impoſſible not to diſcern it. The Salvation of Souls, and the Bleſſing of Peace, are two great Motives which ought to regulate the Duties of the Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt: It would be a Cruelty (for which they muſt give an account unto God) to ſuffer Men to be deſtroyed, whom they might bring back again unto the Church,

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by granting them ſome certain things which would content them, without doing any prejudice to the Fundamentals of Religion. This then is our firſt undiſputable Principle; namely, that all thoſe of either ſide that will endeavour a Re-union, ought to ſearch out Means whereby to content both Parties; not to ſtand upon the Point of Rigour, without any Relaxation; and for the Benefit of Peace, to yield unto any Thing which doth no wrong unto the Eſſence of Faith, and of that Worſhip which we owe unto God.

2. Our ſecond Principle is this, That when once Men are come to that pious Intention, to yield mutually, for the benefit of Peace, they cannot (honeſtly) demand of each other any Relaxation in thoſe things which either of the Parties doth believe to be of the higheſt importance, and of ſovereign neceſſity for the Salvation of Souls. I will ſuppoſe that they do believe, as neceſſary unto Salvation, or as incompatible with Salvation, certain Things, which yet, for all that, are not of the Foundation, and ſo deceive themſelves; but yet notwithſtanding, the Party which is in that Error, ought not to be demanded to make any Conceſſions thereupon: The Reaſon of it is clear, becauſe it would be to damn thoſe People from whom ſuch Conceſſions were extorted. A Man who ſhould believe (for Example ſake) that the Obſervation of *Lent* is abſolutely incompatible with Salvation, and yet notwithſtanding, out of Complaiſance, and for the Advantages of Peace, ſhould re-unite himſelf unto a Church, with an unmoveable Reſolution to obſerve it, would (undoubtedly) damn himſelf; he would commit a Sin againſt his Conſcience, and, in ſome ſort, againſt the Holy Ghoſt: *Whatſoever is not of Faith, is Sin*; and a Man who, in doing an indifferent Action, doth believe that he commits a mortal Sin, doth ſin mortally: He acts (by a Spirit of Revolt) formally againſt the Ordinances of God, or againſt that which he eſteems to be the Law of God. None therefore can, nor ought to force any Party to concede any thing in ſuch Points which they believe to be neceſſary; but muſt firſt inſtruct, convince, and work them into a full Perſuaſion, that they do needleſly ſtartle at things which are not what they do believe them to be. This is our ſecond Principle, which ſeems to us as indiſputable as the former; and to be built upon ſuch ſolid Reaſon, that it will be received by all Perſons who are (never ſo little) diſengaged from Prejudices.

3. Our third Principle is this, That when the Queſtion is of any Article (whether it be of Faith, or of Practice) which one of the Parties

Parties doth hold to be falſe; and ſo falſe, that the Belief, or the Practice of that Article would eſſentially concern Religion, and ruine the very Foundations thereof: And the other Party holds it to be true; but yet ſo, as that the Practice, or the Belief thereof is not (according to his Opinion) abſolutely neceſſary unto the Eſſence of Religion: In this caſe (I ſay) it is clear, that Chriſtian Charity and Prudence do require, that the Party which holds that Article to be true, but not neceſſary, ſhould yield, and bear with the Weakneſs of him who looks upon it as falſe, as intolerable, and as ruinous unto the Fundamentals of Religion; or as incompatible with Edification. This Truth doth ſeem to me to carry ſo great an Evidence in it, that I know not whether it be neceſſary to prove it. Is it not clear, by the precedent Principle, that he who gives himſelf a Liberty in any Point which is really fundamental, or which he believes to be ſo, doth damn himſelf, doth act againſt his Conſcience, and ruine his Salvation? But, on the contrary, That he who takes a Liberty in any Point which he (indeed) doth believe to be true, but doth not believe it to be of an abſolute neceſſity, doth do nothing againſt his Conſcience? In the firſt place, he doth not betray the Truth; for (as we ſhall ſee in that which follows) he is not to be obliged to ſubſcribe the Rejection of that Belief, as if it were falſe; or of that Practice, as if it were evil and criminal: He may keep his own Opinion; he may alſo declare, that ſuch a Belief is good, though he tolerate that which is oppoſite thereunto; and that ſuch a Practice is innocent, though he have renounced it, for the benefit of Peace. *Secondly*, He doth not betray his Conſcience, nor Religion, in ſuffering ſuch a Practice to be abolished, or in leaving every body free to ſuch a Belief; becauſe he is perſuaded that that Belief, or that Practice, are not of the Eſſence of Religion, and that a Man may paſs well enough without them, and never (thereby) run any hazard of his Salvation.

There is nothing that can be more evident than this, That there are moſt innocent Practices, yea, ſuch as are authoriſed by the Teſtimony of the whole Church, which might (yet notwithſtanding) be very well abandoned, if any great Intereſt for the Glory of God, or for the Good of the Church, did depend thereupon. As for Example: The greateſt part of the Chriſtian Churches have (in Baptiſm) renounced Immerſion, or Dipping, and do content themſelves with the Baptiſm of Aſperſion, or Sprinkling: But now, if the *Turks*, who were diſpoſed otherwiſe to their Converſion, ſhould ſtumble hereat, and ſay, that it was of abſolute neceſſity to plunge

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in the Water as many as are baptized, that Jeſus Chriſt did inſtitute it after that manner, that ſuch was the practice of the Apoſtles, and that it was the conſtant uſage of the Primitive Church; would not Chriſtian Prudence be concerned now, to abandon the Baptiſm of Sprinkling, and to return again unto that of Dipping? This would not be to impeach the Memory of our Fore-fathers; for we ſhould never ſay, that the Baptiſm of ſimple Sprinkling is a Sacrilege: Neither would this be the Betraying of the Truth; for we ſhould never ſubſcribe, that the Baptiſm of Sprinkling is inſufficient. It would only be a Sacrifizing unto a great Intereſt, a Ceremony which we do not believe to be important. Now let it be remembred, that there can hardly be any greater Intereſt for the Glory of God, and for the Good of the Church, than the Re-union of thoſe two Parties which do divide the Weſtern Church. If therefore there were on either Side any Articles of ſuch a Character and Quality, that the one Side did hold them to be entirely ruinous to Religion, and that the other did not look upon them (indeed) as meerly indifferent, but yet, nevertheleſs, as not neceſſary, with an abſolute neceſſity; it is clear, that that Party which regarded the Article in queſtion, as not being of exceeding great importance, ought to yield in favour of the other, who did look upon it, as being abſolutely incompatible with Religion. And this is alſo another Principle which ought not (as we conceive) to be diſputed.

4. Our fourth Principle is this, That when the Queſtion is about Articles, or Creeds, whereof both Parties do agree that they are not of the utmoſt importance; that if they be true, yet they are not of the Eſſence of Religion; and if they be falſe, though they are believed to be true, yet they do not deſtroy ſaving Faith: In this caſe, I ſay, the ruling Party, that which is the mightieſt in Number, in Credit, and Authority, ought to be tolerated by the Weaker, who muſt accommodate themſelves herein, for the Benefit of Peace, and to put a Ceſſation unto the Scandal of Schiſm. As for Example: If the Chriſtians of both Communions could agree together, that the Worſhipping of Images, and Praying unto Saints, were not Practices ruinous to Religion, and were no way prejudicial unto Piety: It is clear, that in thoſe States where that Religion which invocates Saints doth bear the ſway, the others ought to accommodate themſelves thereunto; that is to ſay, that they ought not to ſeparate themſelves from the Communion for that thing alone. On the contrary, in thoſe States where the Religion which will not admit the Invocation of Saints doth rule, they who are of a

contrary Sentiment ought to accommodate themſelves thereunto, and not to ſeperate themſelves from the publick Worſhip, although the Saints were not there worſhipped. This is alſo a Rule of Sovereign Juſtice, whoſe Equity ſeems unto us to be moſt manifeſtly evident; the weaker Party would do nothing againſt his Conſcience, by adhering unto a Worſhip wherein he ſhould ſee the Practice of Things, which he doth not (indeed) believe to be either neceſſary or ſo much as good; but yet ſuch, as he ſhould not (on the other ſide) believe to be either contrary, or pernicious unto Religion; it would only be a moſt ſweet ſmelling Sacrifice, which he would offer unto God for the Conſervation of Peace: And this we call another of our unconteſtable Principles.

5. Our fifth Principle is this, that in regard of certain Articles of Belief, or of Practice, which the one ſide doth look upon as important in Religion, and the other doth conſider as leſs important; theſe laſt ought to yield in favour of the former, in not obliging them (formally) to renounce things which they ſhould believe to be true; they ought, I ſay, not to oblige them to the Abjuration, or to the condemning of thoſe Practices as pernicious, or of thoſe Beliefs as falſe: I will explain my ſelf by an Example: The *Roman* Catholicks do believe, that the Opinion of the Real Preſence is a thing of importance; the Reformed (on the contrary) do believe, that it is a great Errour; but yet they do not believe that this Errour doth ruine the Fundamentals; for which cauſe they will tolerate it in the Proteſtants of the Confeſſion of *Ausbourg*. If therefore they ſhould enter into a Treaty of Re-union, with the Chriſtians of the *Roman* Communion, it would not be juſt to oblige them to the Abjuration of the Real Preſence, unleſs they could find means to perſuade them that it was falſe: Now this is a thing which no means can be found to do in a Treaty; and which would alſo be no way convenient to attempt; for there is no endeavouring to perſuade them that the Real Preſence is falſe, but by a Diſpute; but in a Treaty of Re union all controverſal Diſputes ought to be avoided, like a moſt dangerous Rock. In the Re-union therefore, none ought to be obliged to the abjuring of Articles, of the falſity of which one of the two Parties cannot be ſo quickly perſuaded. The Reaſon of this Rule of Equity is evident; for no Man ought to be perſuaded to do any thing againſt his Conſcience. To abjure an Errour, which a Man doth think to be a Truth, is a baſe and fearful Cowardice; for which (if it be perſevered in) I do not believe, that there is any Place for Mercy, in ſo doing he is an Heretick,

Heretick, for he doth ſtill retain the Hereſie inwardly; and he is an Hypocrite to boot, for he confeſſeth the Truth with his Mouth, but doth renounce it with his Heart: No Man ought ever to oblige any one to commit ſo great a Crime. Moreover, whoſoever doth yield in this reſpect, without obliging the other to abjure, he himſelf doth nothing againſt his Conſcience; for in ſuffering another to believe as a Truth, that which he doth look upon as a non-fundamental Error, he doth not oblige himſelf to ſpeak of that Errour as of a Truth, or to make any profeſſion thereof; nay, he doth reſerve unto himſelf a Liberty of reſiſting that Errour, as long as he ſhall believe it to be falſe: Neither doth he do any thing againſt his Conſcience, in not obliging others to the abjuration of ſuch an Opinion; for not believing it to be deſtructive of Religion, he doth not believe that they who retain it do run any hazard of their Salvation. We do never ſin againſt our Conſciences, in tolerating that in another, which we judge to be an Error; but when we do (at the ſame time) judge that Error to be Fundamental and Mortal, in reſpect of Salvation: If then we do tolerate our Neighbour in ſuch Errors, we do ſuffer him to deſtroy himſelf, without ever oppoſing his ruine; which is an unconſcionable Proceeding. One of the Communions which doth divide the Weſt, doth hold the Real Preſence as an important Truth; the other looks on it as a tolerable Error: It is clear, that whoſoever doth eſteem it to be a tolerable Error, ought not to oblige the Party, who holds it to be an important Truth, unto the abjuration of that Opinion; which obſervation doth amount to this, in one Word, that Men ought to bear with one another, and to unite themſelves by the way of Toleration, in thoſe things that are tolerable; as the *Theologues*, *Thomiſts*, and *Scotiſts*, do bear with one another in moſt conſiderable differences about matter of Grace, without making any ſeparate Communion.

6. Our Sixth Principle is this, That there is an infinite difference between tolerating an Error, and making profeſſion that we do believe it; the firſt is an Action of Chriſtian Wiſdom and Prudence; the ſecond is a Cowardice, infinitely Criminal, and a baſe Action, to which we ought never to ſolicite or tempt any Perſon.

Truth is a thing ſo venerable, that reſpect is alſo due unto its very ſhadow, for ſo I call thoſe falſe Opinions, which (by the favour of prejudices) have eſtabliſhed themſelves in the Minds of Men, as if they were unqueſtionable Truths; and ſo much reſpect is owing even to them, that none ought to exact from any Perſon the renunciation of them, as long as that Perſon doth account them to

be Truths. When those Errors are capital and fundamental, after we have endeavoured to deliver them who are prepossessed by them; if we cannot effect that, we must abandon the infected, and renounce all Communion; but we must in no wise force them to profess the Truths which they do not believe: While Errors are tolerable, we may use our best Efforts to dispossess Men's Minds of them; but if we are not able to bring that about, we ought never to force their Mouth to a Confession of that which would be contradicted by their Hearts. We must tolerate such Errors, and endeavour to instruct the Persons with the Spirit of Meekness and of Gentleness.

This Observation is of absolute necessity in this present subject. The Question is of re uniting the Protestants to the *Roman* Church: It must be conceived that they would be capable of tolerating many false Opinions, the belief of which they were not able to profess; and it would be unreasonable to tell them, You do not hold that this Belief, or that that Practice, is mortal; therefore you ought to subscribe and be conformable thereunto. This is also an undisputable Principle, and one that needs no proving, that a Man may safely tolerate divers things, which he ought not to adopt, nor practice.

7. Our seventh and last Principle is this, That no Treaty ought to be made to the prejudice of Truth, and most especially of important Truths: Truth must have her Rights secured, and made good unto her; and it is a Right belonging to Truth, to produce it self, and to prove it self: And therefore in a Treaty of Re-union, by which there should be an agreement of Toleration in many Opinions, upon the Substance and Matter whereof they could not agree, each Party ought to be left to its liberty, to examine those Truths, about which they were not come to any particular determination; and also there ought to be a free permission to examine them publickly, so far as the safety of Peace can allow. There are some Truths that be not of such grand importance, as that the Peace of the Church should be troubled to establish them; as (on the contrary) there are others which are so important, that one ought to have no regard for the Infirmities of Men, nor for the Prejudices which do possess them: This is also a Principle which seems to us to be uncontestable. I know not whether we have been so happy as to bring so clear a Light of Evidence unto these Principles, as that wherein we our selves do see them; but supposing that these Principles are certain, clear, and evident, (as we do conceive them

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to be,) we do not judge that the Re-union should be so very impossible. And this is that, Sirs, which we desire you will be pleased that we may lay before you in this place, by applying these general Principles unto the particular Matters of Fact now in question.

Our first Principle was, That they who will endeavour an happy Re-union, must search out the Means which are proper to satisfie both the Parties; and that both Sides must sacrifice unto the Blessing of Peace all that can be abandoned, without doing any Injury to Religion.

We cannot doubt, Sirs, but that you look upon this as a Maxim of most sovereign Equity. We do (for the present) consent that you should consider us as Schismaticks, who have unjustly separated our selves from the Church, because the Causes of our Separation have not been sufficient: But (however that be) you have too much Understanding and Sincerity, not to see, and not to acknowledge, that if those Causes of Separation have not been sufficient, yet they have not been altogether null, or frivolous. It was a long time that a Reformation was demanded to be made, both in the Head, and in the Members: The whole World did universally complain of the Disorders, and of the Corruptions, which were crept into all the parts of Religion: Now, do you believe, that all that Reformation which might then have been justly demanded, hath been so fully made, as that there remains nothing more to be added thereunto? Were all those Proposals which your Predecessors made, in the Ages last past, unto the Council of *Trent*, unjust, or idle? Might they not have been granted to them, without doing any prejudice to the Church? There were no less than four and thirty Articles, the greatest part of which were of very grand importance: The Seventeenth and the Nineteenth tended to re-establish the Vulgar Tongue in the Divine Service; the Eighteenth made a Demand of the Cup, for the People, in the Sacrament; the Twenty-ninth demanded the Retrenchment of that Abuse which was slidin into the Worshipping of Images, into that of Relicks, into the Pilgrimages, into the Fraternities, *&c.* Now is there any one among you, Sirs, who can believe, that all that which was fit for Reformation, was reformed thereupon? We are persuaded that you are (the major part of you, at least) of his Opinion, who composed *The wholsome Advice of the Virgin to her indiscreet Votaries*; that is to say, that you will confess that there are very many Abuses, which have insinuated themselves into the popular

pular Devotions. Beſides all this, Do not you own, that among thoſe things which divide the Catholick and the Proteſtant, all of them are not of the ſame importance; ſome of them might be foregone, for the benefit of Peace? We do not now mark which they are, but (in the general) we are perſuaded, that you have ſo great a Love to the Peace of the Church, and for the Salvation of thoſe People, unto whom you ſtill do that honour, as to call them your Brethren, that you will freely abandon ſomething, to facilitate their Return unto the Church, provided that the Fundamentals of Religion may ſuffer no Wrong thereby.

The Aim of theſe Reflexions is, to ſhew you, that you are not in ſuch Terms, as that you cannot give a Relaxation in any thing; for as much as that on the one ſide you are ſufficiently convinced, that divers Reformations might be granted unto us, which would be very convenient for the Church; and on the other ſide, your Charity might very well extend it ſelf ſo far, as to leave ſome Practices of ſmall importance, to re-unite a divided Church, and to join it together again, in one and the ſame Place and Communion. If you are reſolved to releaſe nothing, and that you will make no Reformation, it is in vain that you invite us to return unto the *Roman* Church: While you do remain in the ſame Terms wherein you were before the Council of *Trent*, we ſhall be forced to keep in the ſame Terms wherein we are at preſent; otherwiſe we ſhould condemn our former Conduct, and impeach the Memory of our Fore-Fathers; and that is a thing which we will never do. We ought (at leaſt) to have ſome pretext, and that we may be able to ſay, that the *Gallican* Church is not the ſame thing that it was, when we did ſeparate our ſelves from it; and therefore, that as we had then reaſon to depart from it, ſo now we have reaſon to re-return unto it again.

Now, when we do (thus) demand a Relaxation, we are not ſo unreaſonable, as not to offer the like: By the Eſtabliſhment of our Maxim, the Toleration ought to be mutual on both ſides. We are fully perſuaded that our Doctrines are true, and that our Worſhip is moſt pure; but we do not believe that all the Truths which we defend, are of an equal Importance: We could tolerate ſome Errors, oppoſite to ſome of our Truths, waiting until God ſhould be pleaſed to illuminate all of us: We could well enough be aſſiſtent at a Worſhip which (for the Ceremonies of it) was different enough from our own, provided that there be nothing therein contrary to that which doth make up the eſſential part of our Duties,

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and of thoſe Adorations which we do owe unto God. So then, in regard of a Re-union in this firſt Principle, (*viz.* that there ought to be a Relaxation on both ſides, for the mutual benefit of Peace) there is nothing that is impoſſible.

Our ſecond Principle is, That when Men will endeavour a Re-union of two Religions, by way of Accommodation, and of mutual Relaxation, neither of the Parties can (honeſtly) demand of the other any Relaxation in thoſe things which his Oppoſite doth believe to be of the higheſt Importance, and of ſovereign neceſſity for the Salvation of Souls.

We have (already) proved this Maxim; and though we had not done ſo, yet it carries ſo great an Evidence along with it, that it is proved by it ſelf. According to this Principle, it would not be honeſt in you, Sirs, to demand, that we ſhould give our ſelves a Liberty; (for Example ſake) in the matter of Adoring the Sacrament of the Altar, of the Invocation of Saints, of the Adoration of Images, and of many other ſuch like things, which we believe to be of the higheſt importance: For let it be ſuppoſed (if you will have it ſo) that we are in the wrong, that it is but ſome phanatical Conceit, ſome Prepoſſeſſion, that it is any thing which you ſhall be pleaſed to call it; yet, however, we are under ſuch a Conviction; and it is to be believed, that we ſhould damn our ſelves in adoring a thing which, in our Judgment, is nothing but Bread; in invocating any Creature, with a religious Invocation; or in the Adoration of Images. If you ſhould oblige us to give our ſelves a Freedom in ſuch kind of things, before you had fully convinced us, you would render us Hypocrites, Profane, Idolaters, and (by conſequence) you would make us the worſt Chriſtians in the whole World. If you anſwer to this, that we ought to ſubmit our ſelves to the Judgment of the Church, which hath pronounced, that theſe Worſhips are not unlawful, you draw us off from the way of Accommodation, and of Re-union, to caſt us back again into a State of Controverſies; for then we muſt conſider what the Judgment of the Church is, we muſt examine the Matter of Fact; to wit, whether the Church (that is to ſay, the true Church) have really determined, that the Sacrament ought to be adored, the Saints invoked, and Images prayed unto: After that, we muſt examine the Queſtion of Right, and conſider what that Reſpect and Submiſſion is which we do owe unto the Judgment of the Church: To lead us this way, would be to make the Re-union (abſolutely) impoſſible. Beſides, we demand nothing but what we are ready to grant:

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If therefore there be in your *Dogma's*, and in your Worships, any thing which you do believe to be of extream importance, and without which there can be no Salvation, we ſhould be unjuſt to demand of you to give your ſelves a Liberty in theſe things. It lies upon you, Sirs, to mark out unto us thoſe *Dogma's*, and thoſe Worſhips, which you ſuppoſe to be of abſolute neceſſity to the Eſſence of Chriſtianity, and we will ſee whether we can accommodate our ſelves thereunto; that is to ſay, whether we can tolerate them, without ſeparating from the Communion: If we think them intolerable, that (I confeſs) will render the Re-union impoſſible; but I queſtion whether there be many of thoſe things which (according to your proper *Ideas*) are of the Eſſence of Chriſtianity, and which would be incompatible with the Chriſtian Religion, according to the *Idea* which we have of it. Perhaps the Reflexions which we ſhall now make, may give us a clear Light into this Particular.

In the firſt place, The Sacrifice of the Maſs cannot (as we believe) be that part of your Religion which you hold to be of the Eſſence of Chriſtianity, and of which it would not be honeſt for us to demand a Relaxation from you; for, to ſay nothing of this, that Chriſtians, who ſhould have no Prieſts to celebrate that Sacrifice, would not ceaſe (according unto you) to live and die good Chriſtians for all that, if they were in a place where it was impoſſible for them to find Sacrificers. To build nothing upon that, I ſay, that Monſieur *de Meaux*, one of the moſt illuſtrious Members of your Body, hath reduced this Controverſie to a ſmall matter; It is nothing but a Sacrifice of Commemoration; it is a Means to apply unto us the Efficacy of the Croſs. I can ſee nothing in all this, but Ceremonies and Terms, which do diſtinguiſh and ſeparate us: As for Ceremonies, you are too learned (Sirs) in Antiquity, to be ignorant that they have not been the ſame in all Times, and (by conſequence) that they are not of the Eſſence of the Myſtery; and that ſo a Relaxation may very well be made, in reſpect of them, without giving any Wound unto Religion. Let us celebrate the Myſteries with thoſe Ceremonies which were in uſe about the Times of St. *Juſtin Martyr*, of *Tertullian*, and of St. *Irenæus*: Would not that be ſufficient for Religion? Would it be defective with thoſe alone? As for the Terms, you will have it to be called a Sacrifice, and that we are utterly againſt: But is there no way to fix unto the Terms ſome *Idea*, and ſome Signification, which may ſatisfie all the World? Monſieur *de Meaux* hath as good as hit upon

upon it. We are contented that it should be called the Eucharist, a Sacrifice of Commemoration; provided it be understood, that it is the application of the Propitiation of the Cross of Jesus Christ: I believe that all the World will consent to this. There is a third thing, about which (without doubt Sirs) you will make much less difficulty, and that is the usage of this Sacrifice. We do assure our selves that you will heartily abolish private Masses, and Masses without Communicants, which are so constantly, and so certainly contrary unto the usage of Antiquity: Nay, though you should judge them to be good; yet we do believe that you esteem Masses with Communicants to be much more conformable unto the primitive institution of that Sacrament; and so it cannot be that which you do look upon as an essential Point, and upon which it would not be honest for us to demand a Relaxation of you.

But perhaps the adoration of the Eucharist, is one of those Points wherein you could not give your selves any liberty, because that that, according unto you, is of the Essence of Christianity; and on the other side, it is an Article which we are not able to pass: But (Sirs) when you consider unto what the Controversie is at this day reduced, you will not say so. The Question is not now, whether the Sacrament ought to be adored; it is true that the Council of *Trent* hath so ordained. True it is, that the most celebrated Doctors of the *Romish* Persuasion do tell us, that the Adoration ought to be referred to the Species; but that is an Opinion which is not perhaps at this day very currant in the *Gallican* Church: And you do interpret the Council of *Trent* in such a manner, as that it doth not oblige you to adore the Species; all the Adoration is entirely referred unto Jesus Christ. We do not deny but that Jesus Christ ought to be adored in the Communion of the Eucharist: All the Question therefore is about equivocal Signs, which may be referred either unto Jesus Christ alone, or unto the Sacrament in conjunction with Jesus Christ. Now, might there not be a relaxation given, in the matter of Equivocal Signs, without obliging People to them, who believe that they should sin mortally in so doing? Let it be supposed (yet once again) that we are in the Error, in this Point; But is it not an innocent Error? What prejudice doth Religion suffer thereby? What dishonour can there redound unto Jesus Christ by it, since that (in conclusion) we do, and we shall adore Jesus Christ? Is God dishonoured, because I do refuse to adore him in a Stone, in which, yet notwithstanding, I do know that God is? If you will but give good heed to it, Sirs, you will find, that

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(even according to your own *Ideas*) this alſo is not any matter concerning which you cannot give a Relaxation for the benefit of Peace.

Of many other Points, which ſome in your Communion would make to paſs for Matters of abſolute neceſſity; we will touch but at one of them; and that is, adherence unto the Holy See, for ſo you call that which we call the See of *Rome*: But we beſeech you, Sirs, that you will be pleaſed to conſult your own Underſtanding and Judgments thereupon. An Aſſembly of Faithful Perſons, ſituated at the other end of the World, who had never heard talk of a Pope, and who wanted nothing elſe but this; might they not for all that be very good Chriſtians ſtill? Conſult the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory; Was that adherence to the See of *Rome* reputed to be always of the ſame neceſſity? Had the Churches of *Aſia*, in the firſt Ages, the ſame connexion and the ſame dependence upon the *Roman* See, that the Churches of *Europe* at this day have? When there was no Pope at all in the Weſtern Church, did it therefore ceaſe to be a Church? That time hath been ſeen wherein there was not any Pope. During the ſpace of forty years (for ſo long did the great Schiſm of the Weſt continue) there were two Popes to be ſeen at one time; and ſome times no leſs than three; and all thoſe Popes had their ſeveral intrigues to ſpin out that Schiſm, and each of them to maintain himſelf in his particular grandeur; which is as much as to ſay, that there was not any lawful Pope during all that time; for if they had been both of them true Popes, the Church muſt have had two Heads; if one of them had been the true Pope, and the other a falſe, then all the *Latins* which were ſubject and obedient to the Anti-Pope, muſt have been damned, in caſe that adherence unto the true Pope be neceſſary to Salvation: But this is a thing which no Body will avouch, but hold that each Party of that divided Church were in a way of Salvation; and yet that could never be, unleſs that adherence to the Holy See be not eſſential unto Chriſtianity. Therefore (to conclude Sirs) ſeeing that you have defined, that the Pope is not infallible, from whence ſhould proceed the neceſſity of this adherence unto an Head which may lead Men into Error? Seeing that the Council can depoſe Popes, why can it not alſo remove this Burthen? If the States of a Kingdom have the Power to depoſe a King, they have alſo the Power to change the Form of Government; they are Maſters of the Laws, and can change them too. We could add divers other Conſiderations, but theſe do ſeem unto us ſufficient to make you comprehend,

comprehend, that (according unto your own *Idea*'s) adherence to the Holy See, cannot be of the Eſſence of Chriſtianity; and that therefore you ought not to take it amiſs, that we do conjure you to give a Relaxation in that Point.

You will tell us (undoubtedly, juſt as we lately told you) that whether it be Reaſon, or Pre-occupation, a Fanatical Conceit, or ſolid Judgment, whatſoever it be; yet we do believe, that the Sacrifice of the Maſs, the Adoration of the Euchariſt, an Adherence to the Holy See, *&c.* are of the Eſſence of Chriſtianity; and therefore (according unto your Principle) you have no right to ſollicite us to give our ſelves any liberty therein. It is not honeſt, to require People to renounce things, which are (in their Opinion) of a Sovereign Neceſſity: Give us therefore leave, Sirs, to tell you, that you are miſtaken; you ſay that you do judge this to be of abſolute neceſſity, perhaps you think that you do believe ſo, (and undoubtedly People of an ordinary diſcernment among you are of that Judgment;) but we are perſuaded, that you will plainly perceive, and evidently ſee in your own Heart, whenever you ſhall be pleaſed to conſult it without Paſſion, that the *Idea* of Chriſtianity doth not formally include in it, either the neceſſity of any other Sacrifice than that of the Croſs, nor of any other Adoration than that of Jeſus Chriſt in the Heavens, nor of any other adherence but unto the Supreme Head of the Church, which is the Son of God. There are a thouſand things, which we ſay out of Habit and Cuſtom, as if we did really believe them; but whenever we come to give heed to it, we find that thoſe things are no way allyed unto the Original *Idea*'s of our Spirits, and do not at all flow from our Principles.

Our third Principle was this, That when the Queſtion is about a thing, the Belief or the Practice whereof doth ſeem to be Mortal to one of the two Parties, and doth not ſeem to be of Abſolute Neceſſity unto the other; Chriſtian Charity and Prudence do require, that the Party which doth not look upon that Doctrine, or that Worſhip, as being of Abſolute Neceſſity, ſhould abondon it for the ſake of Peace, and ſacrifice it unto the other Party which hath an invincible Horrour for it: We do not believe that any wiſe Perſon can conteſt this Principle; which if you will admit, it will open you a Door to avoid the moſt part of thoſe difficulties which put an obſtacle to our Re-union.

Let us begin with the Invocation of Saints: You know, Sirs, that that doth take up a great part of your Worſhip; you do alſo know, that it is one of the Stumbling-Stones to the Proteſtants,

and ſuch a Stone, that if it be not taken away, it doth put an unſurmountable Obſtacle to the Re-union; for when all is done, we are perſuaded that we ought not, in any faſhion in the World, to bring the Worſhip of the Creatures into the Divine Service: If poſſibly we ſhould be in the wrong, and that you have all the Reaſon on your ſides; yet remember, Sirs, that ſome regard may, and ought to be had unto the infirmities of our weak Brethren; and all that poſſibly can muſt be retrenched in favour of them, that they may not be frighened and ſcared away. St. *Paul* doth ſay (with a great deal of vehemency) *If Meat do make my Brother to offend, I will eat no Fleſh while the World ſtandeth.* We are here abſolutely in the caſe of our third Principle. On the one ſide we do believe, that the Worſhip of the Creatures is deſtructive to the fundamentals of the Chriſtian Religion; on the other ſide you do believe, that the Worſhip of the Creatures is not of abſolute neceſſity in Religion: We do not know any Man among all your Doctors, who ſaith, that the Invocation of Saints is neceſſary unto Salvation; according to all the Chriſtians that there are of your Communion, it is ſufficient to invoke God alone; there is found in that Being infinitely perfect all that is neceſſary to ſatisfie and fill up our Wants: This Principle hath ſo great an Evidence, that all the World is agreed in it, It is only God from whom we receive thoſe Graces which do make us happy, and which do diſpoſe us unto a perfect beatitude; it is enough therefore for us to ask them of him alone. We ought not to pray unto the Saints (according unto you, Sirs) with any other Spirit or Affection than that wherewith we deſire the Faithful here upon the Earth, to pray unto God for us; and is that ſuch a great Piece of Buſineſs, to leave it, when it proves to be ſuch a Rock of Offence unto ſo many Millions of Souls, which (according to your ſuppoſition) do deſtroy themſelves in the Schiſm. You do agree, that a Man who doth content himſelf with the ſuccours of his Brethren's Prayers alone, who are here on Earth, and who ſhould (continually) himſelf pray unto God, ſhould, yet nevertheleſs, be in a very fair way for Heaven, and ſhould not fail of obtaining that which he did ask for.

We deſire you alſo (Sirs) to conſider, that ſuppoſing that the Saints do know our Wants, and do intercede for us; that the Church would loſe nothing by it, though they were not invoked here upon Earth: You are ſufficiently perſuaded, that the Charity of thoſe Glorious Souls is no way in the World dependent upon the Homages which are paid unto them here below; they are jealous only

only for God; they do not require of any body to build them Chapels, and to pray unto them: And if a Ceſſation were put unto that Invocation, not out of any Contempt of them, but for fear of exciting the Jealouſie of God, they would never be diſpleaſed with the Church for that Cauſe; they would pray (nevertheleſs) for the Church in general, and for the Neceſſities of every one of the Faithful in particular. You do alſo know, that though they ſhould be ſuppoſed to be capable of Reſentment for the abandoning of their Oratories, and their Chapels; yet they would ſtill pray unto God, in the behalf of thoſe who did nothing for them: So that the Church would loſe no Succours by retrenching this Invocation, and ſhe would gain an infinite of Souls by the Bargain.

This Invocation of Saints is founded upon that which they call their Interceſſion: You do agree in that Point, Sirs, that the Interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt is only ſufficient for to ſave us; that although all the Saints ſhould be ſilent, provided that our Redeemer did but ſet his Bloud a ſpeaking for us, that our Affairs would go on never the leſs proſperouſly for all that. You do alſo grant (Sirs) that he who doth rely upon the Interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt alone, doth not do amiſs: What prejudice therefore could it be to the Church, to lay aſide the Interceſſion of the Saints? If we ſhould leave it, out of a Principle of Scruple, and of Fear to offend Jeſus Chriſt, we ſhould not yet (for all that) loſe it, in caſe that there be any reality in ſuch Interceſſion; for (as we have lately repreſented unto you) you are ſufficiently perſuaded, that the Saints, if they know our Wants, do pray for the Converſion of the Ungodly, who do never (at all) invoke them; as well as for the Perſeverance of the Faithful, who do.

Unto theſe Conſiderations we may ſubjoin another thing, Sirs, which you do very well know, and which (without making any Myſtery of it) you do openly avouch; namely, that this Invocation of the Saints is very ſubject unto great Abuſes, and that a great number of them are already crept thereinto: The wiſeſt Perſons of your Body do publickly complain of thoſe Abuſes, and do reprove them; they do approve of *The wholſome Advices of the Virgin, unto her indiſcreet Votaries*; *The Defence of the Biſhop of* Tournai, *for thoſe wholſome Advices*; *The Catechiſm of the three Biſhops of* Angers, *of* Rochel, *and of* Luzon; wherein there is an entire Leſſon concerning the Abuſes which ought to be avoided in the Invocation of Saints, and in the Devotion of the holy Virgin: That Leſſon begins thus; *Is there no Abuſe to be avoided in the Invoca-*

tion of the Saints? And the *Catechumenos* is made to anſwer, *Yes, there are many of them, which are but too too common among ill-inſtructed People.* You know, Sirs, that it is impoſſible (in this Caſe) to weed out the Abuſe, without extirpating the Thing which is abuſed; for the People are not capable (in religious Service) to diſcern and ſeparate the Bounds which diſtinguiſh the Honour which is due unto none but God alone, from that which may be render'd unto the Saints: We dare boldly ſay, it is impoſſible but that they ſhould be deceived herein, by their Ignorance, and by thoſe Inclinations they have unto Superſtition.

Whereupon I beſeech you, Sirs, to conſider, that the Worſhipping of Saints, on the one hand, being not abſolutely neceſſary to the Perfection of the Chriſtian Religion; and on the other hand, being ſubject unto ſo many Abuſes, it would become your Piety, and your Charity, to retrench a thing, the privation of which would bring no prejudice to the Church, and the removing whereof would reſtore her ſo many Souls, which (according unto you) are wander'd from her Folds. To conclude, You are (all of you) fully perſuaded that the Divine Service would be never the leſs pure, though none but God alone ſhould be invoked; and therefore you are alſo perſuaded, that God, and his Glory, would ſuffer no prejudice by ſuch Retrenchment.

The ſame things we ſay concerning Images, and the Worſhip of them: That kind of Worſhip will (everlaſtingly) beget an Horrour in the Proteſtants; they believe that the Law of God doth forbid it; they are perſuaded that it is a pure piece of Paganiſm, which the Devil hath brought into the Church; they cannot beat it out of their Thoughts, but that this Worſhip is an invincible Obſtacle unto the Converſion of the *Jews* and *Mahometans*. Suppoſe (if you will) that all this is but Pre-occupation, yet, however, it is ſuch a Pre-occupation as they can never recover from: But, on the contrary (Sirs) you are fully perſuaded, in the firſt place, that Images are not eſſential unto the Chriſtian Religion, and that one may paſs very well without them. *Secondly*, That the Church Apoſtolical was well enough contented without Images. You will ſay, that that was for fear, leſt it might prove a Snare unto the ill-inſtructed *Pagans*, whom they deſired to withdraw from the Worſhip of Idols: But (let that be how it will) it doth thereby appear, that one may be a very good Chriſtian, without proſtrating himſelf before Images. The moſt Learned, and the moſt ſincere among you, do alſo agree, that the Church was without

out Images for more than three hundred Years; which doth ſtill make it evident, that (even according unto you) Images are not neceſſary. *Finally*, You do agree, that the Abuſe of that Worſhip is poſſible, frequent, great, and dangerous: Moreover, it is impoſſible for the Simple to form unto themſelves diſtinct *Ideas* of relative Worſhip, and of abſolute: You cannot be ignorant, how many thouſands of People are miſtaken therein; and that a Peaſant doth proſtrate himſelf before an Image with more Devotion, than he doth before God himſelf. Give us leave, yet once again, to make Application of our Principle here; and to ſay unto you, For God's ſake, Sirs, do not put an Obſtacle to the Re-union of the Church, (which is the greateſt of all the Works which God hath now on foot,) for a thing which the Chriſtian Church can very well be without, and which we believe to be (abſolutely) inſupportable. Take away the Occaſion of ſo many Abuſes, in taking away a Worſhip, the Foundation whereof is, in no wiſe, of the Eſſence of Chriſtianity. A Relaxation ought to be made, for Peace ſake, of unneceſſary *Dogma*'s, and Worſhips, which beget Horrour in the Parties you would draw to them.

This ſame Principle will ſhew you what you may alſo do, in regard of the Retrenchment which is made of the Cup, in the Sacrament of the *Euchariſt*: It ſeems to us to be eſſential; we believe that we do loſe the whole Sacrament, in loſing one part of it. Now, let it be ſuppoſed (yet once again) that there may be ſomething of a phanatical Conceit in this: But yet, will not your Charity have ſome regard to the Infirmity of your weak Brethren, in a thing wherein you acknowledge that the Glory of God is not intereſſed, nor Religion concerned? It is no Sacrilege (according to you) for the People to communicate under both the Species; you acknowledge they did receive it ſo for many hundred Years together: On the other ſide, according unto us, it is a Sacrilege to communicate under one Species. It is clear therefore, that you may accord the Favour we deſire of you in that Point, without any Injury done to your Religion.

Divine Service in a Language which the People do not underſtand, is alſo one of thoſe Articles unto which we may apply our third Principle. You do acknowledge that the Apoſtolical Church did underſtand the Language wherein the Divine Service was performed; you are perſuaded that there is neither any Evil nor Scandal in it, to pray unto God, in the Church, in a Language which the People do underſtand: This therefore can be no great

buſineſs

buſineſs for you to grant; for, let all your Prayers be turned into French, (when all is done,) your Religion doth abide ſtill in its Integrity; but it is ſuch an unſpeakable Torment unto us, that we cannot communicate at a Worſhip, in a Language which we do not underſtand. There can be nothing therefore more conformable to the Rules of Charity, and of Chriſtian Prudence, than a Relaxation in this Particular; the Church would loſe nothing at all by the bargain, and the World would be a great Gainer.

The Liberty of Marriage for the Prieſts cannot concern the Fundamentals of Religion, any more than the other Things aforeſaid, becauſe it is only a Point of Diſcipline. There have been, in the *Latine* Church, Prieſts married ſince the Tenth Age; the *Greek* Church hath abundance of them that are ſo now; and yon (Sirs) do not hold, that the Sacraments which are adminiſtred by thoſe married Prieſts are unlawful; you cannot, therefore, look upon this as a matter of the higheſt importance to Religion; and (as for our parts) we cannot poſſibly conſider it as a thing indifferent, becauſe we look on this Direction of the Diſcipline, as a Sourſe of ten thouſand Diſorders; which, we believe, cannot be any other way remedied, but by taking away that Yoke which impoſeth a neceſſity of an unmarried Life upon ſo many People, to whom God hath not given the Continency neceſſary for ſo holy an Eſtate.

You know (Sirs) that theſe are not the only things which you do not believe to be of ſovereign neceſſity, and which we believe to be very evil: Theſe Articles which we have touch'd at, are only Examples, to fortifie our Rule, which might be extended to a great many other things. Might not your Charity and Chriſtian Wiſdom induce you to make a view of all theſe things, that ſo you might retrench a good part of them? You ſhould (undoubtedly) thereby offer a Sacrifice which would be moſt acceptable unto him who calleth himſelf the God of Peace, and who doth command that Peace be maintained among the Brethren.

It would not be enough for you to retrench the Abuſes, and that which you do call ſo, in the Invocation of Saints, in the Worſhip of Images, in Pilgrimages, in the Adoration of Relicks, in Fraternities, &c. For, in theſe things, we cannot diſtinguiſh the Uſe from the Abuſe; but do eſteem the whole of it to be Abuſe: And though that ſhould be an Error in us, yet it would commend your Charity, to bear with us in a thing, the Retrenchment whereof would infer no Wrong unto Chriſtianity.

Neither

Neither would it be enough for you to permit us not to invocate the Saints, not to adore Images, and not to take any part in the Devotions which reſpect the Creatures; for we cannot communicate with any Church, where all this ſhould be practiſed: It would be (in our Opinion) all one, as if we did it our ſelves. The publick Service is for all the whole Company, we could not hinder our ſelves (if we would never ſo fain) from participating therein: It would be our Worſhip, as well as yours, if we were re-united; or, if we ſhould (formally) oppoſe our ſelves to it (as we ſhould be obliged ſo to do) we muſt then fall back again, into the Miſchief of that Schiſm, from which you would draw us.

To conclude, Sirs; What we demand here, the like we are willing to grant: If you have any Articles which you believe to be of a ſovereign Neceſſity, and which we hold to be almoſt indifferent, or (at leaſt) tolerable, becauſe they do not deſtroy the Fundamentals of Religion, we are ready to tolerate them in our Brethren, and to re-unite our ſelves, though they do not abandon them: It doth lie upon you (Sirs) to mark out which they are. But, we beſeech you, have the goodneſs here to remember, that thoſe ought not to be propounded as (almoſt) indifferent *Dogmas*, and (conſequently) ſuch as we ought to ſuffer, about which, it is notorious, we have declared, that we do look upon them as (altogether) intolerable.

Our fourth Principle is, That in the Articles wherein it is agreed on both ſides, that they are not eſſential, there the weakeſt Side ought to comply with the Practice of the ruling Party. And here (Sirs) you will find all kind of Advantage on your ſide: You are the ruling Party in *France*; you have, in the Head of you, that great Prince, for whom we have ſo much Reſpect and Veneration, that, to ſatisfie him, we will carry our Complaiſance as far as ever it can be carried with a ſafe Conſcience. This Maxim would make you gain more things, than you could loſe by the Precedent; for there would (undoubtedly) be found a great many of thoſe Articles, both of *Dogmas*, and of Worſhips, which, although we do (indeed) condemn, yet we do not believe them important enough to oblige us to keep our ſelves in a State of Separation. We ſhall not mark out, which thoſe Articles are which might be abandoned, to you, becauſe we are not ſufficiently authoriſed thereunto; a full Aſſembly would be requiſite, to diſcuſs an Affair of ſuch importance: But that which we can aſſure you of is this, that this Maxim would ſave you (almoſt) all the exterior part of your Religion; ſo that you might make a Reformation of the Church, without fearing the

Revolt:

Revolt of thoſe People, who are concerned for nothing but the outſide thereof: But (yet neverthelesſ Sirs) you ought not to put into the number of thoſe things, to which we might accommodate our ſelves out of Complaiſance, thoſe external Ceremonies which go to the rendring of a Religious Service to the Creature, for we have told you, that is a thing our Conſciences can never endure.

Our Fifth and Sixth Principles do amount unto thus much, That in the things, which ſhould (by mutual agreement) be retrenched for the edification of the Church, or tolerated for the benefit of Peace, and for a Re-union, neither Party ſhould be obliged either to abjure the Errors and the Worſhips which ſhould be ſo retrenched, or to ſubſcribe to the Opinions which ſhould be tolerated.

This is alſo, Sirs, an Article, which would be entirely unto our advantage; for if your Charity and your Complaiſance did carry you to retrench (for Example ſake) the Invocation of Saints, the Adoration of Images, and that of the Sacrament of the Euchariſt, as things which might be laid aſide, we ſhould not preſs you to condemn as Criminals, the Practices which you ſhould have renounced; but (waiting until God ſhould illuminate you, to make you know the true Character of thoſe Worſhips, and their true Name) we ſhould ſuffer you to ſay, that you had retrenched (out of Complaiſance) Worſhips, which in themſelves were not evil; and by which means you ſhould not be obliged to condemn your Anceſtors, nor to impeach your Church.

But it would be juſt that we ſhould alſo enjoy the privilege of this Maxim, and that in the things which we did tolerate, you ſhould not oblige us to any abjuration of our Sentiments, nor unto a Confeſſion of yours: If (for Example ſake) we did agree to tolerate the Opinion of the Real Preſence, it would not be juſt to oblige us to the Abjuration of the Real Abſence, or to the Confeſſion of the Real Preſence; for that alone would be an invincible Obſtacle to a Re-union. A Man may well enough tolerate an Error; but he ought never to betray the Truth. If it ſhould be agreed upon to tolerate the Opinion of Purgatory, you ought not to oblige us to ſubſcribe to it, nor yet to conceal our proper Sentiments, and by the ſame Reaſon you might not retain all thoſe Worſhips, and all thoſe Devotions, which are founded upon that Opinion of Purgatory; for if you do retain thoſe Worſhips, they will become our Worſhips, and our Devotions, by Virtue of that Union into which we are entred with your Church. We ſhould confeſs and eſtabliſh that Purgatory, which we did in the mean while renounce with

with our Hearts, and which we did condemn by our Words; which would be to put a Christian into a State of Contradiction, and oblige him to establish and to destroy one and the same thing; a Conduct entirely opposite unto Christian Sincerity.

Our Seventh and last Principle is, That in an Accommodation of Re-union, Truth ought to be interessed as little as possibly can be, in such sort, that the generality and particular Persons ought to be left to their own liberty, to instruct themselves by the Word of God, and by amicable Conferences upon those Points, which should be released on both sides; for it would not be convenient to make a Form of Confession of Faith, which all should be obliged to subscribe and to hold unto: It was not so that the Apostolical Church did persevere in their Union, notwithstanding that great diversity of Sentiments, which was between the converted *Jews*, and the Pagans which were turned Christians; you know (Sirs) that that diversity was very great; all the converted *Jews* were Zealots for the Law, as St. *Luke* doth expresly tell us in the 21 Chap. of the *Acts*; they did believe, that the observation of the Law was necessary unto those who did embrace the Gospel; St. *Paul* and all the converted Pagans held, that such observation of the Law, was pernicious: Now they did not patch up a Confession of Faith, in general and ambigious Terms, to content both the Parties; but each of them kept their own Sentiments; and yet for all that they did continue united. You have (Sirs) in your own Church a great diversity of Opinions, in Things of exceeding great importance; wherein every Party hath a right to search out the Truth, and to endeavour to make it known unto others, without any prejudice to the Union: The same course ought to be used in respect of Opinions, which it shall be thought fit to tolerate in favour of a general Re-union. There is good reason to believe, that God will bless the endeavours of those who make search after Truth without Passion, and in the Spirit of Peace, and that (both Parties being re-united) they would quickly come to an universal agreement, as well in respect of Doctrines, as of Worship.

These several Principles which we have here established, and applied unto divers Articles, might be also applied unto a great many more. There are Points of Faith, and there are Points of Discipline; there are Controversies purely speculative, as those of Predestination, Free-Will, Grace, Justification, Merit by Works: It is not this sort of things that can put any Obstacle to a Re-union, because these do rarely come so far, as the People who are the most

intereſſed in this Affair, and a Toleration might eaſily be granted in thoſe very differences, wherein Men of each Communion, do already bear with one another. There are other Controverſies which reſpect the Worſhip; and they will be eaſily terminated by applying unto them the precedent Principles. Finally, there are ſome Controverſies, which relate unto Government and Diſcipline, wherein our fourth Principle will give you huge advantages. It is not for us (Sirs) to take upon us to deſcend into a more particular retail of thoſe things, wherein we might give our ſelves a liberty; but yet I dare aſſure you, that there is ſcarcely any thing which we ſhould not do for Peace, the Glory of God, and our Conſciences (in the firſt place) being well ſecured.

We deſire you moreover (Sirs) to conſider, that the Relaxations, which we deſire of you, do no way intereſt your Honour, nor your Glory, thoſe falſe Maxims of Worldly Glory, ought to have no place or conſideration in Religion. They who make the greateſt advances for Peace, do get the greateſt Glory. You have begun thoſe advances by the Paſtoral Letter, which your late Aſſembly did addreſs unto all our Flocks, we will gladly look upon it as an effect of you Charity; but that ſame Charity which carries you to invite us to a Re union, doth alſo oblige you to open for us the ways unto it: If we were in that Poſt which you poſſeſs, if we were the ruling Religion, it would be our parts to clear and to make plain the ways; but in the place wherein you are, it would be expected from you (Sirs) to do that by virtue of the Authority you have in your Hands, which we in our weakneſs ſhould but in vain attempt. Let this be laid down for an unqueſtionable Principle, That it is abſolutely impoſſible to have any Re-union without ſome Reformation, ſo that if you do ſeriouſly and heartily deſire this Union, you muſt (Sirs) grant ſome Reformation; and do not take it amiſs, if we repreſent unto you, that the Reformation ought to go before the Propoſitions of Re-union; I mean, an actual Reformation; for it would be no way reaſonable, that you ſhould oblige us to re-unite with you, before you had reformed, under the bare promiſe of a future Reformation: For (in the firſt place) in expecting that this Reformation ſhould be wrought, we muſt certainly continue a long time among you. How long were they forced to demand the Council of *Trent*, and the Reformations there made, before they could obtain them? The Catholick Princes were near forty years in ſoliciting them, without any ſucceſs. The ſame thing could not fail to happen here; and in a tedious expectation our Conſciences muſt

groan,

groan, in a Church where we ſhould be obliged to participate in a Worſhip which we believe to be evil. Secondly, What aſſurance could we have that Promiſe ſhould be kept with us? We doubt not but you are ſincere and well intentioned, (Sirs,) but on the other ſide, we doubt not, but that when you had reſolved to reform the Church, you would find thouſands of People to traverſe your Deſign; and if among all thoſe Obſtacles, any ſhould fruſtrate this pious Purpoſe of Reformation, we ſhould find our ſelves in an un-reformed Church, with which we ſhould be forced to break a ſecond time, or to damn our ſelves in it, abiding therein againſt our Conſciences.

Foraſmuch as that in all Treaties, it is neceſſarily requiſite, that the Parties ſhould act by way of accord. It would be abſolutely neceſſary (Sirs) that you ſhould procure his Majeſties full and entire conſent, for our free liberty to confer together; and alſo that we may take advice of our Brethren the Proteſtants of *Germany*, of *England*, *Switzerland*, and the Low-Countries; for whatever reſpect we have for the Orders of his Majeſty, yet we cannot make a Schiſm with our Brethren, neither can we act any thing herein, without their advice and conſent.

After we ſhould have thus conferred together, it would be neceſſary that we ſhould alſo confer with you; not to enter into Diſputes, and to treat of Controverſies, for that is a way which never had, nor ever will have any good ſucceſs. In thoſe kind of Controverſies, the ruling Party will alway have the Reaſon on their ſide; they publiſh what they pleaſe, and yet (when all is done) every Body believes of it as he ſhall find cauſe. The Honour of Victory is more ſought after than the Triumph of Truth. The Conferences ought to run only upon this, what things may be mutually tolerated, and what cannot.

But (to diſpoſe Men's Spirits unto this Re-union) it would be neceſſary (Sirs) that you ſhould procure a Ceſſation of thoſe Rigors and Severities which are exerciſed againſt us, throughout all the Kingdom, under your direction, and by your ſollicitation. Whoever they were that perſuaded you, that this was a good means to make us return, were very ill acquainted with the Heart of Man, and the workings thereof: It is true, that theſe ways of rigour may gain you ſome baſe, ignorant, intereſſed Souls; Souls void of Piety, and without any Love of the Truth; but it will (endleſly) drive away from you, all that have any Zeal, or ſo much as the leaſt ſpark of Honour in the World. When a People ſhall ſee their Temples pull'd down, their Altars demoliſh'd, their Children ſnatch'd out

of their Arms, their Eſtates plundered, their Liberties violated, when they ſhall ſee themſelves bereaved of Sacraments, their dying Friends without any Conſolation, the Living without Inſtruction; when they ſhall ſee their Countreymen incited to their ruine, and that they are continually threatned with Death, Maſſacre, and Pillage; when they ſee themſelves ſhut up in a Kingdom, ſo that they cannot go any where elſe to ſeek their Means of Living, which is denyed them in their own Country, againſt the Law of Nations, which doth permit Perſons to ſeek Food for their Bodies, and for their Souls, whereſoever they can find it: All this (I ſay) is apt to provoke and enflame, to incenſe and ſet Men's Spirits on Fire, to ruine their diſpoſitions unto Re-union, and to baniſh all thoughts of Peace.

And therefore it is a Preliminary of abſolute neceſſity to reclaim Men's Spirits, which are made hagard and exaſperated, by the hardſhips which they have ſuffered of late years; to reduce them (I ſay) by opening the Priſons unto ſo many Innocents, who are ſhut up for no Cauſe but for Religion; by reſtoring unto ſo many Conſciences, which are now in Slavery, the liberty to follow their own Motions; by permitting ſo many ſcattered Flocks to re-aſſemble themſelves, to pray unto God, and ſo many baniſhed Miniſters to return into the Kingdom, there to join their Prayers with thoſe of their Brethren, that they may obtain the Bleſſing of God upon this great Deſign of a Re-union. In the Name of God (Sirs) remember that the Ways of Rigour are not thoſe which the Goſpel doth command: The Feet of a perſecuting Converter (which comes with thundering Arreſts, with Menaces, and offenſive Arms) are not the Feet of the Evangeliſts, of which the Holy Ghoſt ſays, *Oh, how beautiful are the Feet of him that bringeth good Tidings of Peace, that publiſheth Salvation, that ſaith unto* Sion, *Thy God reigneth!* We do earneſtly beſeech you to have pity upon ſo many Thouſands of Souls, driven out of the Kingdom, who have ſaved nothing but their Conſciences, and who are reduced unto very cruel Extremities. We do heartily beg, that you will ſuffer your ſelves to be moved by the Tears of ſo many Perſons who weep for the Infants which are ſnatched out of their Boſoms, and out of their very Bowels, againſt the Laws of Nature, who do miſerably periſh by the harſhneſs of their Country-men, who are violenced in their Conſciences by the Laws, which do lay a Yoke upon their Souls; who are cruelly tormented with the Remorſe wherewith their own Weakneſs doth upbraid them; who do aſſiſt at your Myſteries, without having any Faith, or Reſpect for them; who find themſelves

ſelves reduced to a Neceſſity, either of loſing their Goods and Liberty, or of betraying their Sentiments.

I will add (Sirs) that you ought not to conſider the great diſproportion of Numbers, Strength, Credit, and Authority, which is between you and us: Say not, that we ought to yield all, becauſe we are the weakeſt. Conſider that it is not only us, with whom you treat; it is with the whole Body of the Proteſtants; you ſhall act for all *Europe*; for it is as certain as any thing in the World can be, that if the Re-union be made in *France*, by the way of a juſt Reformation, all *Europe* will imitate you, and all the Proteſtants would follow us: And ſo you ſhould acquire the greateſt Honour that the Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt can ever arrive unto; that is, to cloſe up the affrightful Wound of the Church, which hath layen a bleeding for ſo many Ages.

Ever ſince the Eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity among the *Galls*, the *Gallican* Church hath ever been one of the moſt glorious Parts of the Univerſal Church. It is ſhe which hath (in all Times) expoſed her ſelf, with the greateſt Courage and Succeſs, againſt Tyranny: She hath preſerved her ſelf in greater Purity than any other, in the general Corruption. There is nothing more to be done, to crown the Glory of your Church, but (only) to make her the Reformatrix of the univerſal World: That is a thing which you may do; and it is beyond all doubt, that your Example would have ſuch Influences in it, as would be extended unto the uttermoſt parts of the Earth You would draw thoſe who would not follow you, and all the World would yield to your Authority.

By this Means, the Kingdom of that great Prince, under whoſe Orders you act, would become the moſt glorious that ever any was, ſince firſt there were Kings upon the Face of the Earth: All the World would bleſs him, and he would thereby open himſelf a Way to the univerſal Empire: All the People of *Europe* would make it their Delight, and take it for an Honour, to be united under the Domination of him, who ſhould have re-united them into one and the ſame Religion. You would have the Honour (Sirs) to live in the Memory of Poſterity, as the ſecond Fathers of the Church, and her great Reſtaurators: You would have the Pleaſure to reſtore the Service of God to its primitive Luſtre, and Apoſtolical Purity: You might take for your Model, the Churches unto which the Saints, *Ireneus*, *Ignatius*, *Policarp*, *Cyprian*, and all the holy Biſhops of the three firſt Ages did preach. Reform Chriſtianity upon that Foundation, and you will not only reſtore Peace unto the Church,

but

but alſo open the Gates thereof unto all Infidel Nations: The *Jews* and the *Mahometans* will make no difficulty to adore our God, when you ſhall have taken out of their ſight thoſe Images, which they call Idols; that religious Adoration of Saints and Angels, which they do call the Vice-Deities, and Secondary Gods of the Chriſtians; when you ſhall permit them to ſerve none but one God inviſible, and not command them to adore an Object which they eat: As long as theſe Stumbling-ſtones do lie at the Church-door, the Infidels will never enter into it. Reſtore the Worſhip to that degree of Spirituality, which is eſſential unto Chriſtianity: Purifie the Temple, and the Spirit of God will fill it, and that Spirit will make your Word, and your Examples, efficacious for the Converſion of thoſe Countries which are ſeparated from the Church.

This is that (Sirs) which we ſhould have anſwered, if we had been authorized (by the whole Body, whereof we are Members,) by way of Return unto the Paſtoral Letter, which you did us the Honour to write unto us, in your late Aſſembly. We do earneſtly beſeech you (Sirs) that you will awaken the Bowels of your Compaſſions towards your Brethren, whom you do ſuppoſe to be in a State of Wandring and Error; but who are (nevertheleſs) your Brethren, (as great Strays, and deceived, as you ſuppoſe them to be:) Deal therefore with them, as with Brethren, and not as with Enemies: That your Exhortations may have the more Efficacy, open unto them the Way of Grace: Draw them with the Cords of Humanity, that ſo you may bring them back again, into the Boſom of that Mother, from whom you pretend they have ſeparated themſelves: They will (undoubtedly) anſwer your Invitations with Joy, as ſoon as ever they ſhall be able to do it, without reſiſting the Voice of their Conſcience.

F I N I S.